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**PLANNING COMMISSION****Meeting Minutes****Monday, June 5, 2023****I. Call to order and Roll Call**

**The Meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chairman Matt Kowalski with roll call:**

Matt Kowalski, Chair

Thomas Phillips, Vice Chair

Alison Heatley, Secretary

Jim Carty- Arrived 7:06

Tom Covert

Chet Hill

Kyle Marsh

Karen Roberts

Wa Hubbard, Ex-officio

Brock McIntyre (Student Rep)-  
ABSCharlotte Bruderly (Student  
Rep) Departed 8:43Julian Malek (Student  
Rep)-Arrived 7:23;  
Departed 8:43

Also present: Michelle Aniol, Community Development Manager; Grace Whitney, Associate Planner; Megan Masson-Minock, Carlisle Wortman Associates; Marcus McNamara, OHM; Ed Root, DAFD; and Scott Munzel, City Attorney.

**II. Action on Meeting Minutes from: Regular Minutes of May 1, 2023**

Motion Roberts, support Hill to approve the May 1, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

Unanimous voice vote approval with Carty absent

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Motion Marsh, support Roberts to approve the meeting agenda as presented with the following changes:

- Remove Item B under public hearings: **PTAZO23-02 Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance** – Public hearing to consider a text amendment to Article 10, Section 10.10 Non-Residential Use Table, Sub-section B. Discussion and possible action following the public hearing.
- Create a new business item C: discussion of self-storage amendment to the zoning ordinance

Unanimous voice vote approval with Carty absent

**IV. Public Hearing(s):**

**A. PTAZO23-01 Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance** - Public hearing to consider a text amendment to Article 11, Section 11.10 Form-Based District Use Table, sub-section B. Discussion and possible action following the public hearing.

Ms. Aniol presented the report from staff including removing the change to section 11.09 and summarized the review criteria for a text amendment.

Chair Kowalski opened the public hearing at 7:09. No public comments were received. The public hearing was closed at 7:10.

Motion by Hill, Support Marsh: Pursuant to Section 23.06 of the City of Dexter Zoning Ordinance, together with the information presented by staff and the input received during the public hearing conducted by the Planning Commission on June 5, 2023, the Planning Commission recommends City Council **approve** PTAZO 23-01 Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Section 11.10 Form-Based District Use Table, sub-section B, to add Multiple-Family Dwellings, as a Special Land Use in the VR-2 District, for Site Type B parcels fronting on Village Streets and only if adaptive re-use.

Ms. Masson-Minnock stated that the Planning Commission could add a condition to exclude single family homes from adaptive reuse.

Mr. Carty stated he was okay with reuse of single-family homes for multiple family. Ms. Hubbard agreed.

Mr. Marsh questioned if ADUs make this option more available anyways. Ms. Roberts commented that the upfront cost of an ADU makes this more difficult than an adaptive re-use. Mr. Phillips added that he is concerned about the possibility of replicating student housing similar to in Ann Arbor. Ms. Aniol stated that the Planning Commission could add the condition limiting single family re-use and reconsider the issue when a rental ordinance has been adopted. She is anticipating that being done this calendar year. Mr. Kowalski stated that these concerns were valid and it makes sense to add restrictions now and to revisit this section when a rental ordinance is in place.

Mr. Hill withdrew his previous motion.

Motion by Hill, Second Marsh: Pursuant to Section 23.06 of the City of Dexter Zoning Ordinance, together with the information presented by staff and the input received during the public hearing conducted by the Planning Commission on June 5, 2023, the Planning Commission recommends that City Council **approve** PTZO 23-01 Text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Section 11.10 Form-Based District Use Table, sub-section B, to add Multiple-Family Dwellings, as a Special Land Use in the VR-2 District, for Site Type B parcels fronting on Village Streets and only if adaptive re-use, **subject to the following: With the exclusion of single family houses.**

Mr. Marsh asked for clarification on if any proposals would have to come to Planning Commission as a special land use. Ms. Aniol confirmed that this was correct.

Ayes: Carty, Hubbard, Hill, Phillips, Roberts, Heatley, Marsh, Covert, Kowalski

Nays: None

Motion carries.

**V. Pre-Arranged Participation: none**

**VI. Reports of Officers:**

- A.** Chairman Report – Chairman Kowalski encouraged commissioners to take a look at the 8180 Main St. site from Mill Creek Park and from along the frontage of the site.
- B.** Planning Commissioners & Council Ex officio Reports: Mr. Marsh agreed with Chairman Kowalski that perspective on this site is important. Ms. Hubbard reported that 20-30 citizens spoke at the last City Council meeting in opposition to the project proposal at 8180 Main. She was to help provide accurate information to citizens about the project.
- C.** Committee Reports: None
- D.** Community Development Office Reports – CDM (provided separately): Ms. Aniol provided the following updates to the Commission:
  - The developer of the Pelham (8180 Main St.) has received many comments and is working to incorporate feedback into the project. She reminded the Planning Commission that while public opinions are valid, approval or denial of a project must be based on ordinance standards and findings of fact.
  - City staff is working to create a webpage with development/redevelopment projects so that all of the information for projects is available in one location. Ms. Hubbard asked if it would be

possible to create a development project email listserv. Ms. Aniol stated that there is not enough staff resources to do this but can include information in current email updates. Mr. Covert suggested looking at the project tracking used in Pittsfield Township for some inspiration for the webpage.

**VII. Citizen Wishing to Address the Commission (Non-Arranged Participation)** - *Those wishing to address the Planning Commission must follow the instructions in the [City of Dexter Resident Zoom Meeting User Guide](#) and provide their name and address. Each speaker is limited to 5-minutes or 10-minutes for a representative of a bona fide group/organization.*

Matt Heron, representing the purchaser of 2558 Bishop Circle W, spoke regarding the proposal to prohibit self-storage in the RD district. From their perspective the current ordinance is not an error and special land use was contemplated as part of current language. They feel that there was a reaction that would prohibit self-storage use. They believe that their project meets the master plan and community goals and would be a positive development. There is no self-storage in Dexter so this project would be a needed service.

Ann Gordon, 7909 Third St, voiced her objections to the Pelham project. She stated that Mill Creek Park is an important place and she is concerned about a project of that size overlooking the park. She stated that she understands a need for development but does not feel like this is the right location and that companies with large amounts of money are able to build whatever they want.

Jordan Downing, 8228 Bridgeway, recently moved to Dexter because it is a small town. He believes that 3 large buildings would be an eyesore. He commented that he understands the cost is too expensive for a brewery but large residential is not a good fit here. He added he would like to see the space used for park purposes and feels 150 Jeffords is an example of a better suited location for residential project. He voiced his support for the new website page to keep people informed on projects.

Jake Carwell, 8200 Bridgeway stated that he is looking forward to new educational materials being available. He stated that he would love to see the unique piece of property at 8180 Main be a public space and facilitate accessibility to Mill Creek Park. He added that he is looking to see what options come out of continued discussions.

Dawn Shay, 8224 Bridgeway commented that she moved to Dexter for the sense of community and charm. She enjoys living next to the trail. She stated that she feels components like first floor businesses, the trail, and library foster a sense of community. She included that she is looking into park grants and feels a large development will affect the sense of place.

Zach Michels, 3225 Dover thanked the commission for their work and thanked the public for engaging in the process. He stated that the CAPT/DART regional planning group will be hosting a meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the WAVE office for regional housing task force discussions.

Katie Ramsburgh 8453 Parkridge agreed with other concerns voiced about the Pelham. She is also concerned about environmental impacts and privacy and would like to see a better use of the property.

**VIII. Old Business – None**

**IX. New Business**

**A. PPPSP23-05 Mill Creek Flats (PUD) Application for Conceptual Review (7997 & 7965 Grand St)**

Mr. Covert recused himself due to involvement of MAVD

Mike Penn from Grand Development Group introduced the project proposal. He stated that as a realtor he sees a need for more housing options in Dexter. That is why the project is proposed to be attainable rental units.

Rob Boroughs with OX Studio gave a presentation of the project design. He summarized some of the requested waivers.

Ms. Mason-Minnock gave a presentation of CWA's report included in the meeting packet. She stated that the third waiver listed in their report should be removed and replaced with a request for a tree replacement waiver.

Mr. McNamara presented the report from OHM as included in the meeting packet.

The Planning Commission took a 5-minute recess beginning at 8:45 PM. Chairman Kowalski resumed the meeting at 8:51PM

Mr. Root presented the DAFD report as included in the meeting packet.

Ms. Aniol gave a brief overview of the staff review. She guided the PC to use the staff report as a guide for discussion items. She highlighted possible options for reconfiguring parking to address issues with circulation.

Mr. Phillips stated that he was happy to see a rental project. He noted that he has previously criticized projects that don't match Dexter and that he appreciates the applicant thoughtfully designing something that fits and is architecturally exciting.

Mr. Carty echoed Mr. Phillip's comments. He added that he is in favor of the proximity of the front to Grand St and the consideration to be consistent with the frontage of Grandview Commons. He spoke positively of the tunnel entrance concept, the use of 2 buildings instead of 1, tying the project into natural space, and connecting to the adjacent path. He concluded by saying that he would like to see some of that same creativity applied to the side bordering with the cemetery and that he feels the parking issues are easily fixed.

Ms. Roberts commented that she likes the model and the common space. She feels that the view of the cemetery is like a park and would have imagined more attention oriented toward the park instead of Grandview. She asked about what flipping the "L-Shape" might look like. Additionally, she stated that she hopes this project will attract both ends of the age spectrum to live in Dexter.

Mr. Carty stated that he wouldn't want the building up to the cemetery and believes that public opinion of that layout would be negative.

Mr. Hill commented that he likes the bike storage but would like to see a few racks outside for visitor. He voiced his concerns about some of the large trees on the property and that they have the potential to add property value if kept. He added that he would like to see the applicant consider shifting the parking lot to preserve large trees and use evergreens to screen the cemetery.

Ms. Heatley stated that she feels flipping the building could disturb the cemetery. She feels that the residents at Grandview would prefer to look at another residential building than a parking lot. She included that she thinks delivery spaces are important. She also added that she wants to keep parking away from the cemetery and doesn't want to compromise that preservation to save a tree.

Mr. Kowalski commented that he is troubled by the Grand St. frontage because other buildings on the street have front porches and walkways,

Mr. Marsh gave his opinions on the project. He stated that he would prefer front doors facing Grand St. to break up continuous wall. He raised concerns about the material of the upper story cladding and recommended looking at modern style cornices to see if they could fit the design. He stated that modified parking and screening the

cemetery with evergreens would be helpful. He also recommended outdoor bike parking.

Mr. Kowalski encouraged the use of crosswalks internally. He also voiced concerns about tree preservation waiver. Although it is premature to consider the waiver without the completed landscape plan, he would like to see an effort to preserve as much as possible.

Ms. Hubbard added that preserving trees is good.

**B. Discussion:** Fences in the secondary front yard.

Ms. Whitney presented the staff memo and asked the Planning Commission for guidance on what they would like the standard to be in secondary front yards. Mr. Phillips stated that fences can look poor and divide up neighborhoods. Mr. Marsh disagreed and stated that he feels fences can be beneficial for neighbor relationships. Mr. Carty added that he feels that backyard fencing is appropriate but not front yard fencing.

Ms. Whitney asked the Commission if they would prefer three-foot or four-foot maximum fence height in secondary front yards. The majority of commissioners voiced support for 3 ft fences in all front yards. Ms. Whitney reported to the Commission that staff will draft new ordinance language for review based on this feedback.

**C. Discussion:** amending zoning ordinance regulations for self-storage facilities

Ms. Aniol summarized the staff report. She gave a history of the regulation in question during Planning Commission and ZO Updated Subcommittee discussions. She stated that the inclusion of self-storage as a permitted use in I-1 and RD districts was an error and recommended adding language with standards and changing the use to a special land use in both districts.

Mr. Phillips disagreed that this was a mistake in the I-1 district. He commented that this is not an intense use and the proposed standards would make self-storage impractical. Mr. Cary agreed that the standards were too restrictive and would like to have additional time to review those specifics. He stated that he believed this was a mistake and was never discussed.

Mr. Hill stated that he did not understand the objection to use in RD. Mr. Carty stated that it should be a special land use to allow for more scrutiny and to avoid filling up the research park with storage. Ms. Roberts added that she believes the use should be a special land use in the RD district but not permitted in the I-1 district.

Mr. Marsh raised concerns about the tax revenue in the research park covering the cost of infrastructure.

Mr. Covert voiced his agreement that the draft language would be too restrictive. He commented that this use could work in these zoning districts but understands a special land use due to limited space. He stated that he supports dividing the use into 2 types.

Mr. Phillips added that a business wanting to build something indicates a present demand.

Mr. Kowalski voiced his support for self-storage as a special land use for the RD district.

Mr. Munzel, City attorney, addressed the commission. He stated that the text amendment can be procedurally initiated. He added that case law supports that a project is not vested in zoning until some work has begun and a change can affect a current application.

Mr. Kowalski stated that if the code changes, the Planning Commission would want a project to meet the most up-to-date code.

Motion by Carty, support Hill: The Planning Commission resolves that the City of Dexter Zoning Ordinance be amended such that self-storage facilities are designated a special land use in the I-1 and RD districts.

Ayes: Carty, Hubbard, Hill, Roberts, Heatley, Marsh, Kowalski

Nays: Covert, Phillips

Motion carries.

**X. Proposed business for Tuesday, July 11, 2023:**

**A.** ASPP23-01 Preliminary Site Plan Review, 2558 Bishop Cr E., Superior Self-Storage (anticipated)

**B.** Preliminary Site Plan review for gymnastic studio (anticipated)

**XI. Citizens wishing to address the Commission**

Matt Heron representing purchaser of 2558 Bishop Circle West: Disappointed by the result of the discussion on self-storage text amendment. The developer, Ryan Joss, wants to work with the City on what they see as a needed use. He believes the letter that was submitted was meant to protect the client's rights and feels that an attempt was made to address the procedural problem presented. He would like for the developer and the City to maintain a positive working relationship.

**XII. Adjournment**

Mr. Carty asked staff about the status of Millenium Place. Ms. Aniol stated that their lawyer is in the process of reviewing legal documents from the City.

Mr. Covert asked staff to consider a monitor facing the audience and possibly a bench outside the building.

Motion by Carty, Support Hill to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 PM.

Unanimous voice vote approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Whitney  
Associate Planner

Approved for Filing July 11, 2023

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